

**PROJECT
PLOUGHSHARES
CALGARY**

Peace News

NOVEMBER 2013



We are located:

**Parkdale United
Church
2919 8th Ave NW
T2N 1C8**

403-270-7366

Office hours:

**Mon Tues & Thurs
9:30 am - 2 pm**

Wed 12 - 4 pm



**2020 Vision for Humanity:
toward human security worldwide
A Symposium on November 2, 2013
Parkdale United Church, Calgary, AB
8:00AM - 5 PM**

We invite you to engage with us in looking at some of the problems we face as a global society, as well as some of the creative solutions that are possible. Broad topics will include: Transformative Movements and Initiatives; Peace, Natural Resources and the Environment; Legal Issues, Conceptual Frames, and Measures of Effectiveness; and Human Rights and Human Capabilities. The afternoon will also include presentations by the Parhad Research Scholars about the projects they have recently completed. Lunch and snacks provided. For more info and to purchase tickets, see: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/peacestudies/symposium>. Registration is \$60 until noon on Friday November 1st, or \$80 at the door.

**Conversations on Peace & Global Citizenship
Project Ploughshares and the
Calgary Centre for Global Community present
"Creating Peaceful Homes: Toy Store Survey
Results and Peaceful Parenting Discussion"
Wednesday November 13 7 - 9:00 PM
Parkdale United Church, 2919—8 Ave NW**

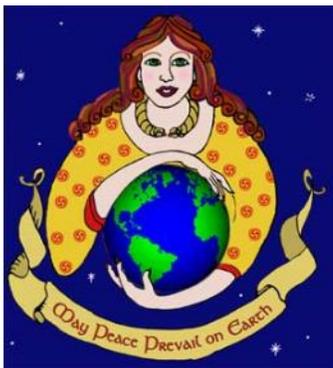


In early November peace volunteers will be visiting toy stores to enumerate violent and non-violent toys present on the shelves. Awards will be given to stores that focus on selling toys that engender non-violent play. Results will be presented to the media and announced at this parenting evening.

Naomi Turner and Mahendra Singh are married with two children ages 3 and 1. They will present some of their views on bringing up children to become peaceful citizens then open the floor to discussion.

Naomi Turner, B.A. (Environmental Studies and Sociology), B.Ed. has taught in environmental education centres, a Waldorf School, an NGO in India as well as in an Inuit community in Northern Canada. Currently she is teaching in a cooperative and enquiry based Calgary Board of Education school with children from all over the world. Naomi strives to ensure a more holistic approach to education and emphasizes that the very essence of peace is in recognizing our interconnectivity with everything. She develops artwork and storytelling as a means to express the value of unity. Naomi is currently writing children's books for peace education.

Mahendra (M.A., M.Phil. Non-violence and Peace Studies) has been involved in various social, environmental and educational movements over the years. In his quest for a harmonious and holistic way of life, Mahendra explored many philosophies. He lived in a Buddhist monastery as well as in Gandhi's Ashram in India to study and practice a non-violent, peaceful and sustainable way of living. He shows how global relationships, unity and co-existence with everyone and everything on Earth can be achieved through inner transformation and mutually fulfilling relationships. Mahendra is on The Board of Directors of The Calgary Centre for Global Community and is a member of The Consortium for Peace Studies at The University of Calgary.



Alternate Remembrance Day Ceremony
November 11, 2013, 2 - 3 PM
Calgary Community Peace Pole
(Bow River Pathway just east of 10th St LRT Bridge)

Remembering our history means we need to remember it all, including the voices of peace: those who have fought and learned that war is not the answer; those who have refused to fight; those whose home, bodies became battlefields; and those who have never stopped working for peace. This Remembrance Day we will share some of these stories as we gather, listen and remember.

29th Annual
Holiday Peace Fair
Sat. November 23, 2013
NEW LOCATION!
Parkdale United Church
2919 – 8 Avenue NW
9:30 AM – 4 PM

**Supporting Social Justice,
 Fair Trade and
 the Environment**

**Unique items from 30 vendors
 working for peace, social justice
 and the environment**

**Light lunch available
 for purchase**

\$2.00 admission
Free for children 12 and under

Sponsored by
Project Ploughshares Calgary
www.ploughsharescalgary.ca
office@ploughsharescalgary.ca
 403-270-7366



Conversations on Peace & Global Citizenship Syria: Is International Law the Enemy of Good? Wednesday, October 23, 2013 Akram Jomaa Centre

An interesting and well-informed panel comprised of Dr. Arthur Clarke of the Calgary Centre for Global Community, Souheil Merhi of the Muslim Council of Calgary, and Garry Fry, community peace activist discussed questions relating to the ongoing conflict in Syria through the

lens of International Law. Three questions were posed to the panel members, with a representative sample of their answers following:

Can you tell us a bit about the background of the current conflict in Syria?

Souheil reminded the audience that so far 5 million people are displaced in Syria, more than 20 million are affected, and 120,000 have lost their lives. We have a legal system but not justice, with certain countries exploiting the situation. We need resolutions to ease the suffering.

Garry Fry reminded us of how the war began – with citizens of Darrah protesting because Assad had dropped the oil subsidies. The Arab League was petitioning for the international community to do something about Syria back in 2012.

Dr. Arthur Clark widened the perspective on Syria by saying it is part of a larger human behavioural problem. We have thousands of years of expecting, preparing and engaging in war. It will take a long time, and much effort, to adjust this thinking to using a peace paradigm instead. In the meantime the Syrian war is the fault of all of us, as well as the Syrian Govt. When there is pressure from outside a country (eg. selling arms) it creates more tension inside a country. Corporate greed is a factor in this war.

Souheil: Everything is relative. Lebanon was under Syrian occupation for years. The international community were soft on Stalin, because he was doing a job they needed. Iran and the US really have no issue between them – they are just fighting over the pie.

Is int'l law the enemy of the good?

Dr Clark: The UN charter says that states must stop threatening each other. It is less clear about internal conflict because people have a right to get rid of their government. The 2001 UN Responsibility to Protect doctrine was ratified by the African Union but not by the big players. It says that a state cannot attack another state unless it is attacked, or unless the attack is OK'd by the Security Council.

Souheil: We are turning a blind eye to justice. Power has become justice. International opinion used to matter, but people don't care now.

What can or should the Int'l Community do?

Souheil: We are all affected. There is always hope. Canadians are expected to bring justice. Keep pushing to make people aware of the needs of the Syrian people.

Garry: We need to think of many alternatives. eg., abolish the Security Council. Question the press. Question democracy. Int'l Law IS a step forward. It needs to be enforced.

Dr Clark: The UN won't solve all problems. Responsibility to Protect under these circumstances is not viable. There is a small group of power and wealth behind Assad, NOT the general populace.

Audience member. The US has been involved in the Middle East for the last 50 years. CIA agents have been interfering from the Turkish border. They knew what kind of leader Assad was 20 years ago. Most Syrians don't want military intervention from outside. They are not supporting either the rebels or Assad.

Audience member: There's a game to destroy Syria. In elections the ballot says Assad yes/no? One's response is attached to one's file. People elect people based on misinformation. Saudi Arabia is not happy because the US is going for peace in both Syria and Iran.

Audience member: War is a psychological problem. Peace takes a different psyche. Sometimes we think a state is immortal but borders have all changed over time. We need a new thinking that distinguishes peace thinking from war thinking. The two are not together.

Audience member: In our schools we have bullying policies but not always the will to implement them. Let's not be like that on an international level. Get active eg. protest when the Government pulls an embassy out of a country, as they did in Syria.

Dr Clark: Non-violent conflict is significantly more successful in terms of preserving human lives, than violent conflict. We need to be more pro-active. We should view ourselves as human, not a national of a country. We influence the direction of change every day with our thoughts, words and deeds. We have the choice of two human societies: one where we say 'I am not responsible. I am powerless' (having no idea we are influencing the future with these thoughts); the other society is where we say, 'I do have influence. I am responsible'. We are making choices for the future. Be conscious.

We'd Love to Have YOU on board as one of our EXTRAORDINARY VOLUNTEERS!



We are looking for some volunteers for the Marda Loop Justice Film Festival to promote Project Ploughshares programs at our table there. If you're available to help on Friday, Nov. 15th from 6:30—9 PM, Saturday Nov. 16th from 2—9 pm, or Sunday Nov. 17th from 1—5, please give Karen a call at the number below.

We are also looking for a few more volunteers to help out with the Annual Peace Fair on November 23rd. If you would like to greet people at the door, help out with Ploughshares table sales, serve food in the kitchen, or maybe help out in setting up and taking down the tables and chairs pre and post Peace Fair, we'd love to hear from you!



We are also in need of people to bring in baked good for the annual bake sale that is part of the Peace Fair. If you can bring anything for our bake sale, that would be greatly appreciated! You can bring items to Parkdale United Church on Friday November 22nd from 11 am - 3 pm, or Saturday morning November 23rd from 8:30 - 9:30 am.

Please give us a call if you're interested in exploring these or other options.

Karen at **403-270-7366** or **office@ploughsharescalgary.ca**

MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



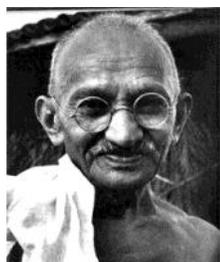
Donations

We received \$2,750 during the month of October from individual donors. When you're planning your charitable donations, please think about Project Ploughshares and give generously! We value your contributions, and would like to thank all those who continue to contribute big-heartedly to support Project Ploughshares. We can't continue to do the important and meaningful work of peacebuilding without you!



Entertainment Books

If you're looking for an inexpensive way to go out for dinner now and then, or ways to save on various retail items, movies, drycleaning, etc.—please consider purchasing a 2014 Entertainment book from Ploughshares Calgary today! Call Karen at 403-270-7366 to reserve your copy.



“Let the first act of every morning be to make the following resolve for the day:

- I shall not fear anyone on Earth.***
- I shall fear only God.***
- I shall not bear ill will toward anyone.***
- I shall not submit to injustice from anyone.***
- I shall conquer untruth by truth. And in resisting untruth, I shall put up with all suffering.”***

~ Mahatma Gandhi

“The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that its center is really everywhere, it is within each of us.”

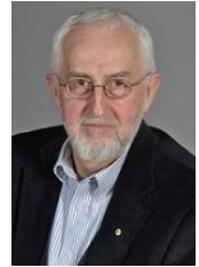
~ Black Elk



Upholding the norm against chemical weapons

Posted by Ernie Reghr, September 9, 2013, <http://disarmingconflict.ca/2013/09/09/upholding-the-norm-against-chemical-weapons/>

The rationale for an American attack on Syria has come down to a single argument. If chemical weapons use is not met with immediate and lethal reprisals, the norm against such heinous attacks will erode, leaving Bashar al-Assad and dictators like him free to use chemical weapons with impunity. But does that argument hold up?



Prime Minister Harper makes the argument by warning us of the consequences of inaction. President Obama says that “failing to respond to this breach of this international norm would send a signal to rogue nations, authoritarian regimes and terrorist organizations that they can develop and use weapons of mass destruction and not pay a consequence.”

But is there any evidence to support that claim?

Gas attacks have been rare. The last ones before the current Syrian case were carried out in the 1980s by Saddam Hussein. The main attacks were against Iranian troops during the Iraq-Iran war. Thousands were killed, but there were no reprisals. The world stood by and the United States remained Saddam’s steadfast friend throughout that decade. Indeed, the Washington Post’s “Fact Checker” recently recounted in some detail the now familiar story of US silence and even complicity in response to the Iraqi chemical attacks.

Toward the end of that decade Saddam used chemical weapons against Kurdish civilian Iraqis, again without any direct response from the rest of the world.

But an epidemic of chemical weapons use obviously didn’t follow. The fact is, the norm against chemical weapons is robust, and it remains so, not because of any military defence or enforcement of it, but because of a combination of powerful social, political, legal, and diplomatic norms and reinforcements.

Public revulsion at any kind of gas attack, whether against troops or civilians, is rooted in the collective psyche – bolstered especially by World War I history and related literature.

Politically and legally, the norm is rooted in the 1925 Geneva Convention and the near-universal Chemical Weapons Convention which entered into force in 1997. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons guides and monitors ongoing programs to destroy existing stockpiles in compliance with the CWC. To date, more than 80 percent of the world’s declared stockpiles of chemical agents have been verifiably destroyed. (Syria is not a party to the Treaty and of course has not declared its stockpile.)

It’s true that every new use – however infrequent and whether or not other forms of violence, as in Syria, far exceed it – threatens the norm and must thus be met with a serious, uncompromising response that honors the norm and helps to sustain support for it.

In the Syrian case, a primary requirement is that there be a relentless, exhaustive investigation of the Syrian event – one that is independent of the politically-laden “assessments” offered by Washington. A legal and evidence-driven response by the international community to chemical weapons use in Syria could and should include

- a) a Security Council reference to the International Criminal Court to bring alleged perpetrators to trial,
- b) ensuring that the successor regime in Syria ratifies the Chemical Weapons Convention and carries out supervised destruction of all stocks and manufacturing facilities,
- c) updating the Treaty’s regulatory regime to address issues such as transfers of dual use chemicals, and
- d) fulfilling the international community’s promise to seriously pursue the establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

A military attack on Syria would have any number of unforeseen consequences. But the one thing that can be said with some certainty is that such an attack would be neither about, nor essential to, strengthening the norm against chemical weapons use.

